The Early Modern English Period

C.M. Millward: A Biography of the English Language
John Algeo: Origins and Development of the English Langauge

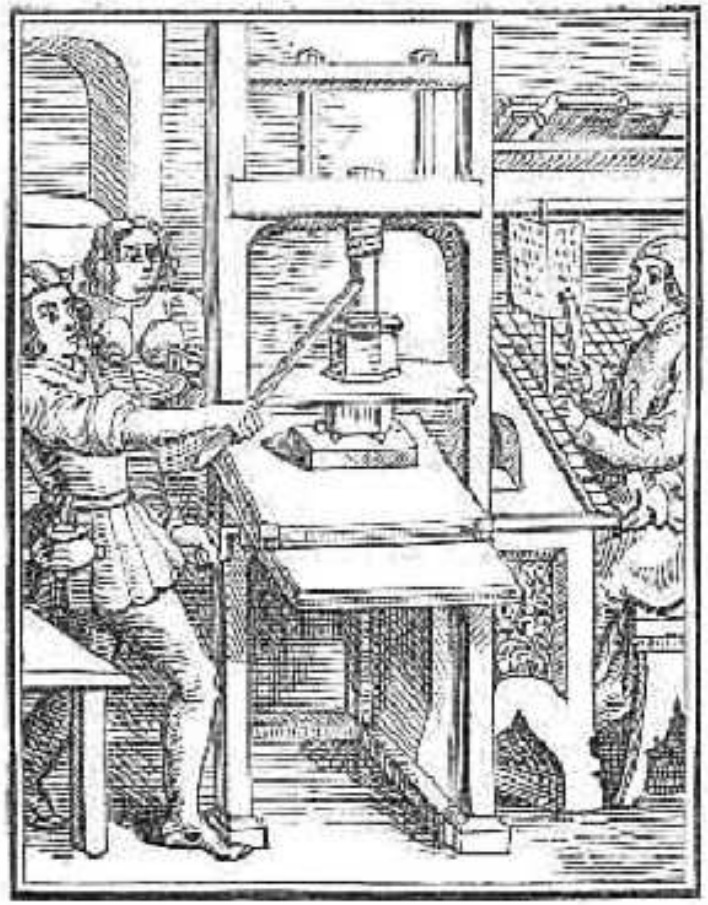
Michael Cheng
National Chengchi University

Key Historical Developments

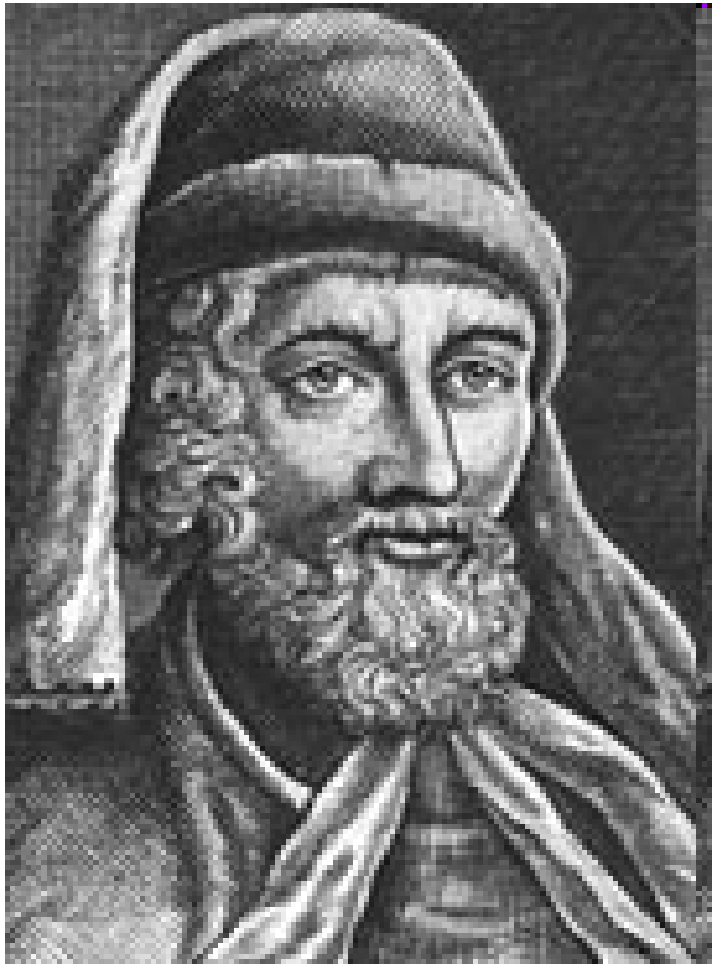
- The Printing Press
- The English Renaissance
- The Protestant Reformation
- Nationalism
- The Enclosures
- Exploration and Colonization
- The Industrial Revolution

- Explain how bringing the printing press to England had an effect on the English language.
- How did the renaissance affect the English language? Also explain the influence of a person like Robert Lowth.

Key Historical Developments: The Printing Press

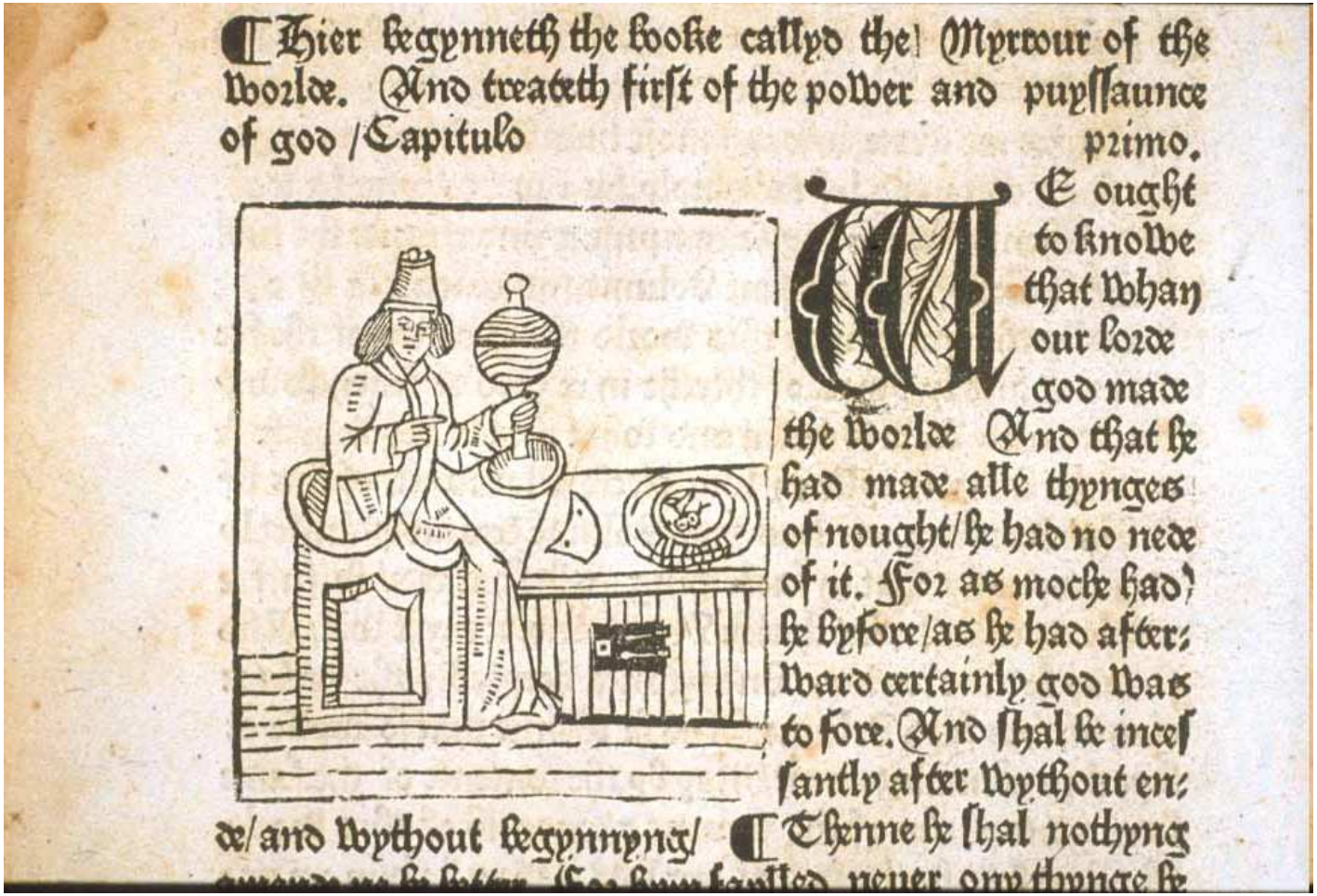


- 1476 William Caxton sets up his printing shop in London
- Printing freezes spelling
- The London dialect became the standard for English and regional dialects declined in prestige



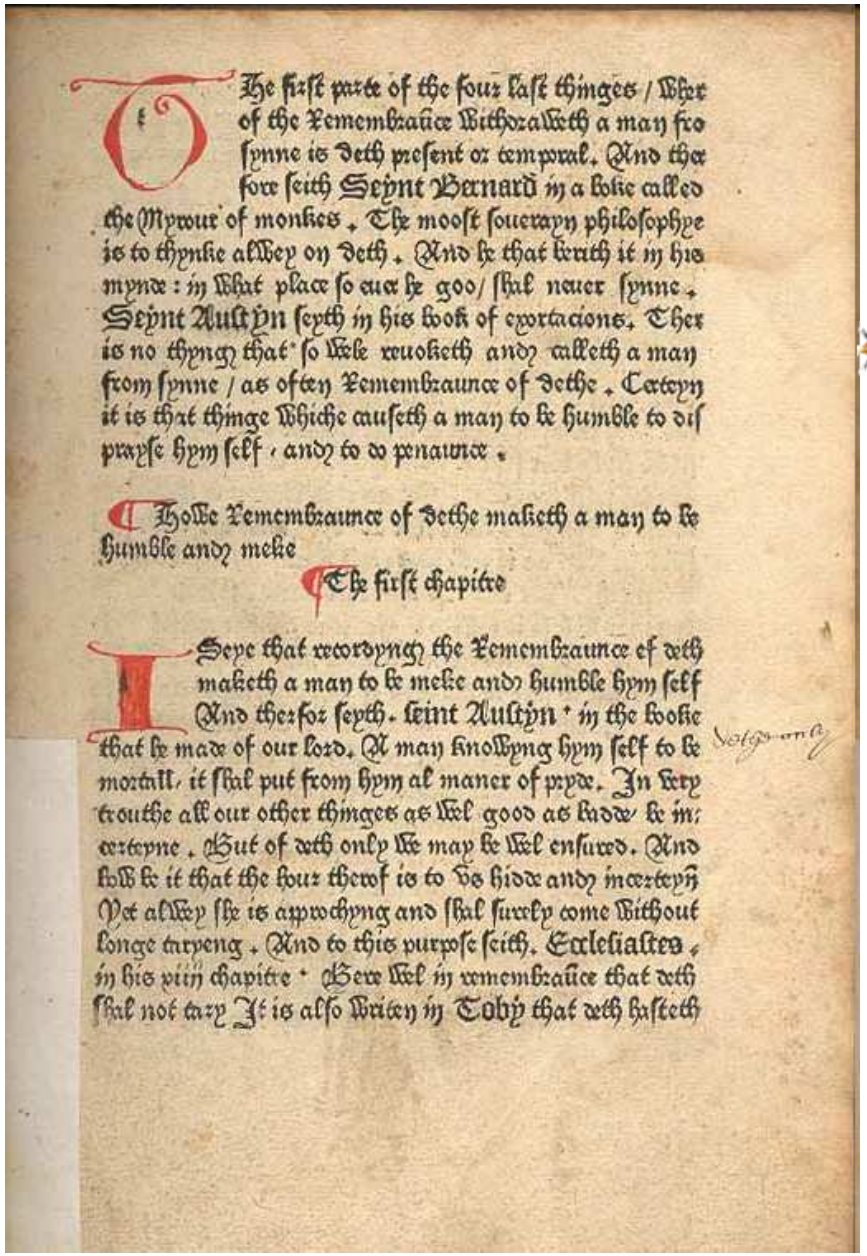
- Books became available for a lower cost, increasing their demand among the middle and lower classes, which did not know Latin or Greek
- The demand for books written in English increased
- Caxton printed over 100 books. He translated a number of the books that he published.
- 1640 20,000 titles in English

The MYRROUR of the worlde. [Westminster:] William Caxton, [1490]



¶ Hier begynneth the booke callyd the Myrrour of the worlde. And treateth first of the power and puyssaunce of god / Capitulo primo.

We ought to knowe that whan our lorde god made the worlde And that he had made alle thynges of nought/ he had no nede of it. For as moche had he byfore/as he had afterward certainly god was to fore. And shal be incessantly after wythout ende/and wythout begynnyng/ ¶ Thenne he shal nothyng



The first parte of the four last thinges / Wher of the remembrance withdraweth a man fro synne is deth present or temporal. And therfore seith Seynt Bernard in a bolle called the Mirour of monkes. The moost soueraynphilosophye is to thynke alwey on deth. And he that keith it in his mynde: in what place so euer he goo/ shal neuer synne. Seynt Aultyn seyth in his book of exortacions. Ther is no thyng that so wele reuoketh and calleth a man from synne / as ofte remembrance of dethe. Certeyn it is that thinge whiche causeth a man to be humble to dispraise hym self, and to do penaunce.

Hoolle remembrance of dethe maketh a man to be humble and meke

The first chapitre

I seye that recordyng the remembrance of deth maketh a man to be meke and humble hym self And therfor seyth. Seint Aultyn in the boke that he made of our lord. A man knowyng hym self to be mortall, it shal put from hym al maner of pryde. In verytrouthe all our other thinges as wel good as bade be incerteyne. But of deth only we may be wel ensured. And how be it that the hour therof is to vs hidde and incerteyn Yet alwey she is aprochyng and shal surely come without longe tarryeng. And to this purpose seith. Ecclesiastes, in his viij chapitre. Here wel in remembrance that deth shal not tary It is also writen in Toby that deth hasteth

- ***Cordyale, or Four last thinges*.**

Westminster:

William Caxton,

24 March 1479

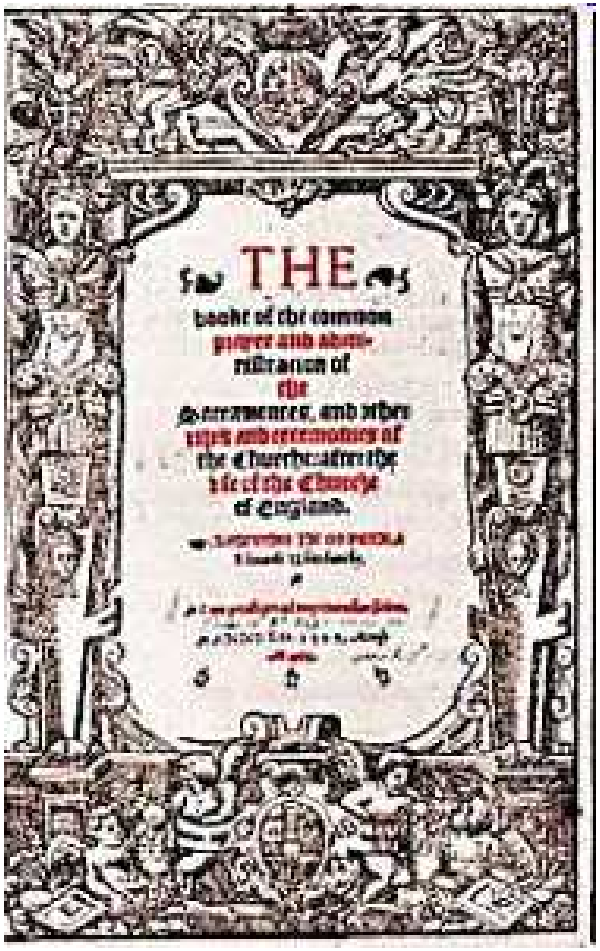
Key Historical Developments: The English Renaissance (late 15th-16 centuries)

- Revival of interest in classical learning resulted in translations of Caesar, Plutarch, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, and Homer.
- Loanwords brought into English
- English authors developed a sophisticated style that incorporated features are classical rhetoric
- English compared to Latin and seen as deficient; pressure to “improve” English

Key Historical Developments: The Protestant Reformation (16th c)

- Henry VIII
- 1534 Act of Supremacy
- Split with the Catholic Church
- Protestants believed that you should read the Bible yourself
- 1535 Coverdale prints first complete English Bible
- 1539 “Great Bible” version published by Coverdale for Henry VIII
- 1549 Book of Common Prayer published
- 1611 King James Bible

Key Historical Developments: The Protestant Reformation (16th c)



- 1549 Book of Common Prayer published
- 1549 Marriage Ceremony
  - http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1549/Marriage_1549.htm
  - 1662 Marriage Ceremony
  - http://www.eskimo.com/~lhowell/bcp1662/occasion/marriage.html
- 1550 put to music
  - http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Merbecke/Merbecke.htm

Key Historical Developments: The Protestant Reformation (16th c)

- Education
- Most educators were clergymen who taught in Latin
- New schools set up by merchants and the gentry staffed by laymen who taught in English

Key Historical Developments: Rising Nationalism (late 16th cent)

- 1558-1603 Queen Elizabeth I
- 1570 Excommunicated
- Pride in the English language
- Status of Latin as the language of learning was undermined by conflict with the Catholic Church and the continent
- Desire to produce national literature in English

Key Historical Developments: Rising Nationalism (late 16th cent)

- 1590 Spenser's Faerie Queen
- Allegorical work praising the virtues of Queen Elizabeth
  - Holiness
  - Temperance
  - Chastity
  - Friendship
  - Justice
  - Courtesy

Key Historical Developments: The Enclosures (16th-17th centuries)

- Landowners combined small holdings into larger ones
- Converted estates into sheep pastures to increase wool production
- 1000s of tenants evicted
- Dispossessed drifted to cities
- Cities became a melting pot of dialects
- My Fair Lady (7+ minute mark)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yM7Fye7O4Nw

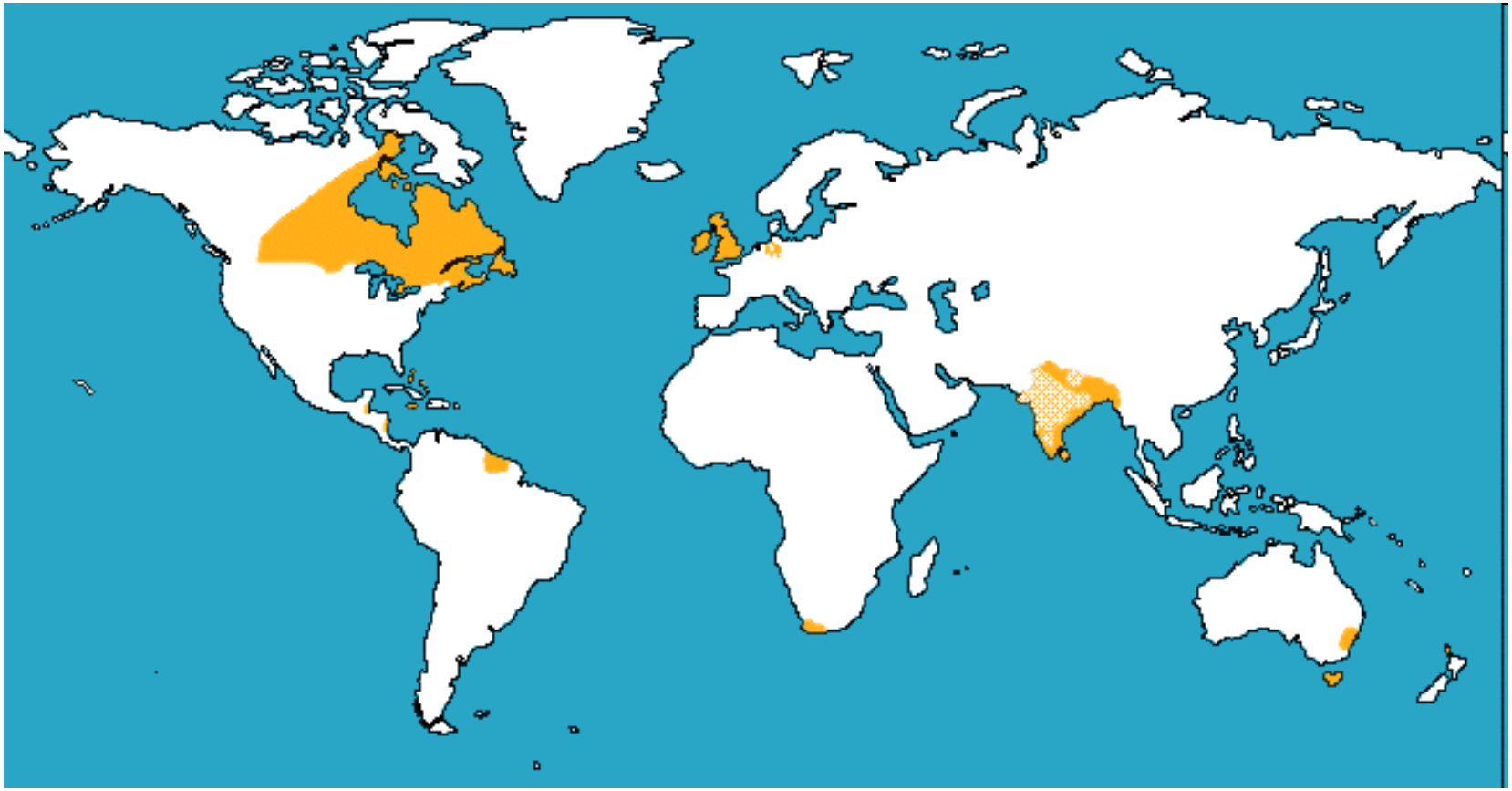
Key Historical Developments: The Enclosures (16th-17th centuries)

- Urbanization led to the rise of the middle class
- Wanted to improve social standing
- Concerned about correct behavior
- Handbook of correct English usage written
- Authoritarian; hard and fast practical rules that were easy to understand and memorize

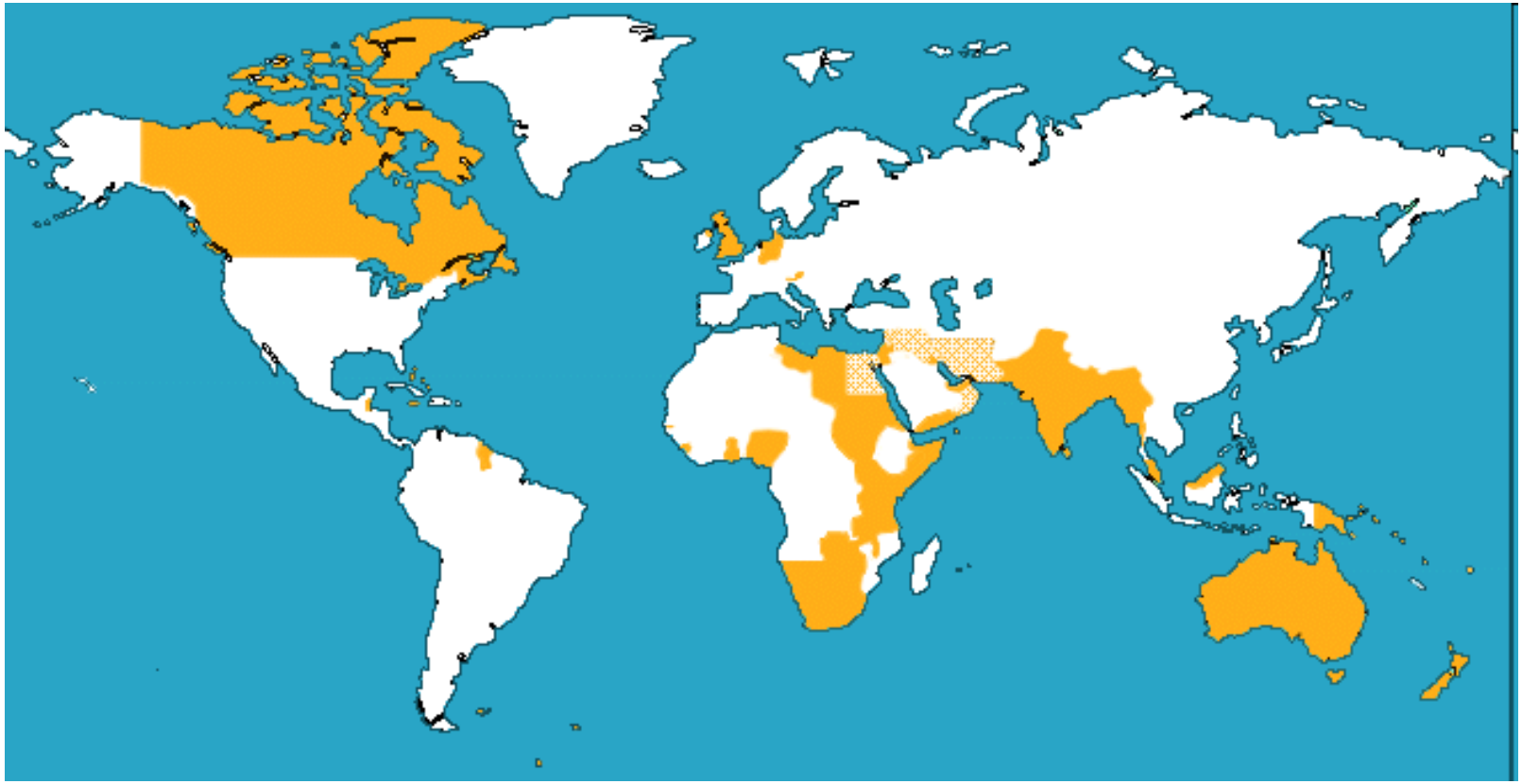
Key Historical Developments: Exploration and Colonization (17-19th c)

- 1558 one overseas possession: Calais
- 1588 defeated the Spanish Armada and became major sea power
- 1800 British empire in North America, Central America, Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific
- Exotic loanwords introduced into the English language

British Empire 1815



British Empire 1945



Key Historical Developments: The Industrial Revolution (late 18th c)

- James Watt develops modern steam engine leads to the Industrial Revolution
- Intensive urbanization
- Technical vocabulary based on Latin and Greek roots
- Child labor leads to a decrease in literacy

Key Historical Developments: The American Revolution (late 18th c)

- First separation of English speakers from their parent country
- Beginning of multiple national Englishes
- American English
- Australian English
- New Zealand English
- Indian English

English as a language of learning

- The Early Modern English period was one in which Latin and English contested over which one would be used as the language of learning in England

English as a language of learning

- Advantages of Latin
- Used by scholars worldwide
  - Had to be a member of the club to understand it
- Superior language
  - Closer to the ideal Universal Grammar
  - More vocabulary
  - Uniform orthography
  - Fixed and unchanging

English as a language of learning

- Disadvantages of English
  - Degenerated from a perfect language
  - Insufficient vocabulary
  - Orthography is not uniform
  - Language keeps changing
- Advantages of English
  - Everyone can understand it

$ More people will buy books written in English

English as a language of learning: Improving English

- Scholars borrowed words from Latin to supplement the English vocabulary
- Some scholars defined the words that they borrowed
- Other scholars used Latin words merely to show off their knowledge
  - pistated = baked
  - homogalact = foster brother

English as a language of learning: Improving English

- Inkhorn/Inkpot terms
- Words that were written by scholar, but had never actually been spoken
- Thomas Wilson:
  - Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers tongue. And I dare sweare this, if some of their mothers were aliue, thei were not able to tell what they say… I know them that thinke Rhetorique to stande wholie vpon darke wordes, and hee that can catche an ynke horne terme by the taile, him they coumpt to be a fine Englishman, and a good Rhetorician.

English as a language of learning: Improving English

- Chaucerisms
- Some scholars reacted to Inkhorn term by attempting to revive vocabulary used by writers like Chaucer
- Sir John Cheke tried to translate the New Testament of the Bible only using English terms

Chaucerisms

- moond
- crossed
- biword
- fleshstrings
- threlike
- endsay
- saywhat
- over-reacher
- dry mock

Chaucerisms

- moond
- crossed
- biword
- fleshstrings
- threlike
- endsay
- saywhat
- over-reacher
- dry mock
- lunatic
- crucified
- parable
- muscles
- equilateral triangle
- conclusion
- definition
- hyperbole
- irony

Revived words

- astound
- doom
- bevy
- craggy
- dapper
- drizzling
- enshrine
- fleecy
- glee
- gloomy
- merriment
- shady

Inkhorn Terms

Common	Lost
discretion	contund
exaggerate	effodicate
expect	exinanite
industrial	synchysis
scheme	transumptive

English as a language of learning: Improving English

- Defense of Inkhorn terms
  - Words could be understood in context
  - They would become familiar with use
  - The best writers are using them

Examples of Inkhorn terms

From Latin	Latin from Greek	From Greek
adapt	anarchy	aphrodisiac
allusion	analysis	autopsy
complicate	anomalous	catastrophe
conspicuous	antipathy	criterion
dexterity	caustic	dogma
excursion	chaos	enthusiasm
expedite	emphasis	ephemeral
hereditary	genesis	gastric
jocular	gymnasium	idiosyncrasy
impersonal	mentor	lexicon
mediate	monogram	misanthrope
typical	parenthesis	ostracize
zealot	pathetic	

Improving English: Spelling

- Spelling was very free
- Printers often altered spelling just to make a line the right length
  - *been, beene, bin*
  - *fellow, felow, feloew, fallow, fallowe*
  - *neibor, neighbor*

Improving English: Spelling

- Suggestions for new spelling systems by
- Cheke: remove all silent letters, double vowels to show length
- Smith, Hart, Bulloker: new letters and diacritical marks for vowels, or dots to show vowel length
- Mulcaster: get rid of redundant letters, add letters where needed, alter spelling when the pronunciation was different use vs. use

- Spelling eventually stabilized by printers

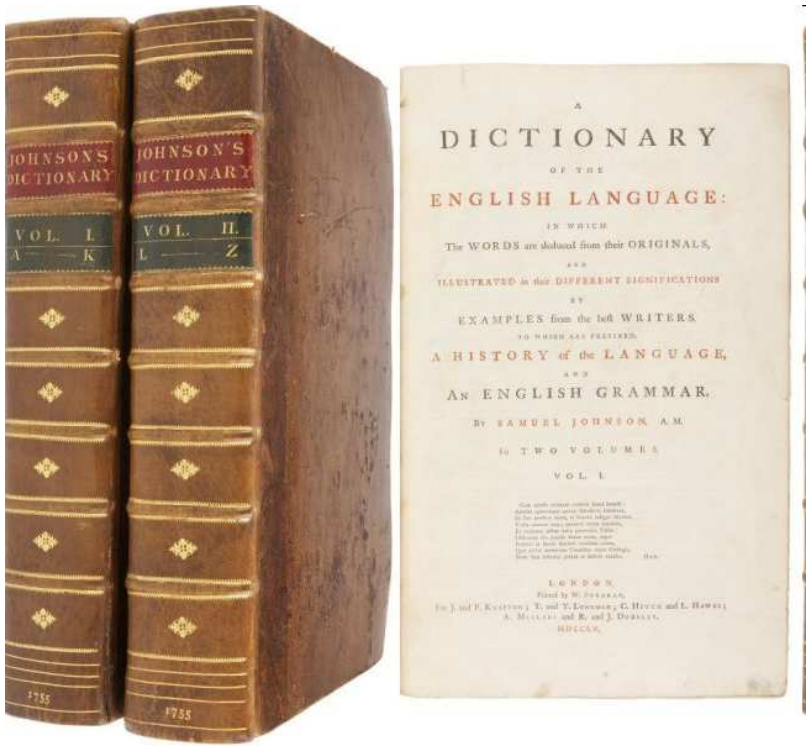
English as a language of learning: Dictionaries

- All the new Latin borrowings meant that many words unknown to the general population were entering English
- 1604 Robert Cawdrey published “A Table Alphabeticall”
- 2500 rare and borrowed words with definitions

Cawdrey's A Table Alphabeticall

- ***A*Table Alphabeticall,** conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c.
- With the interpretation thereof by *plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons.*
- Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elswhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues.
- http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/cawdrey/cawdrey0.html

English as a language of learning: Dictionaries



- 1755 Samuel Johnson
- A Dictionary of the English Language
- 40,000 entries
- Illustrative quotations
- Fixed the spellings

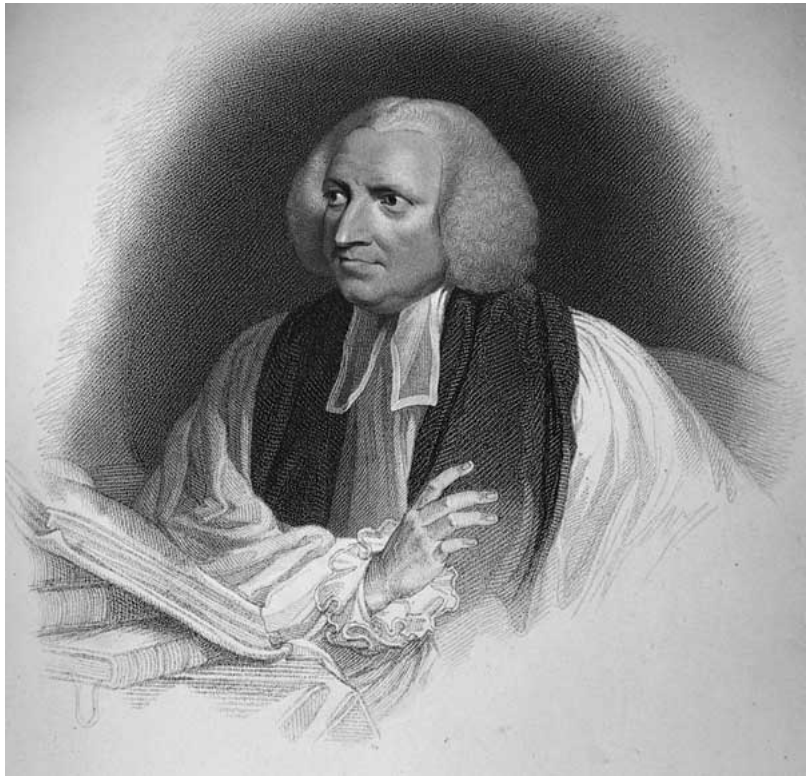
English as a language of learning: Grammar Reform

- Universal Grammar
- Belief that language was of divine origin and that modern languages had deteriorated from the perfect original language
- Older highly inflected languages (like Latin and Greek) were closer to the original language
- Sparsely inflected English must have fallen quite far from the ideal

English as a language of learning: Grammar Reform

- Goals of grammar reformers were to ascertain (establish rules), refine (purify), and fix (prevent future change) the English language
- Prescriptive grammar books were very popular
- Gave the middle class rules that they could follow to “improve” their English

English as a language of learning: Grammar Reform



- Robert Lowth
- 1710-1787
- Bishop of the Church of England
- Professor of poetry at Oxford

English as a language of learning: Grammar Reform

- 1762 Robert Lowth
- A Short Introduction to English Grammar
- Condemned what he thought was incorrect usage
- Used logic to describe grammar
- “Two negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an affirmative”

English as a language of learning: More rules set by Lowth

- No double comparatives or superlatives
- No split infinitives
  - *Writers should learn* ***to not split*** *infinitives.*
  - *This is a great opportunity* ***to once again communicate*** *our basic message.*
  - *I need you all* ***to really pull*** *your weight.*
- No stranded prepositions
  - *Where does bacon come from?*
  - *What is he talking about?*

English as a language of learning: More rules set by Lowth

- between vs. among
- shall vs. will
  - I shall, we shall
  - you will, he will, she will, it will, they will
- No ain’t

Early Modern English Orthography

- y substituted for Þ in words like the and thee
- Þ didn't exist in the early type fonts that printers got from the continent, so y was substitued
- y^e = the or thee, ye = you

Early Modern English Orthography

- i and j considered the same letter
- u and v used for either a vowel or consonant

EME Changes: Loss

[ç] and [x]

Lost	Note /f/
sight	*laugh*
caught	*cough*
although	*tough*
high	*enough*

/t/ in 's' cluster

	Note:
castle	*handsome*
hasten	*landscape*
wrestle	
listen	
hustle	

/l/

	Note:
talk	*silk*
chalk	*hulk*
palm	*salt*
calm	*bolt*
half	

initial /w/ before /r/

wrong
wrinkle
wrist
wring
wrangle

EME Changes: Loss

initial /g/ before /n/

Lost	Note:
gnaw	*agnostic*
gnome	*Agnes*
gnosticism	
gneiss	

/g/ in final /ŋg/

king
song
hang
thing
-ing

initial /k/ before /n/

know	Note:
knee	*acknowledge*
knowledge	
knack	
knight	

final /ə/ lost

made
judge
name
hope
trade

Early Modern English Orthography

- Spelling was influenced by Latin
- Etymological respellings
- Silent h added
  - Fr: habit, herbage, homme
  - Eng: habundance, abhominable
- h inserted after t in many words
  - throne, theater, thesis, anthem, apothecary, Catherine, Anthony

Early Modern English Orthography

- schedule from cedule
- debt from det
- doubt from dout
- rhyme from rime
- comptroller from controller
- fault from faute

The Great Vowel Shift

- All the long vowels had shifted from continental values by the beginning of the Early Modern English Period
- Cause of the shift are unknown

EME Phonemes: Vowels

The Great Vowel Shift

	Front	Central	Back
High	i ɪ		u ʊ
Mid	e ɛ	ə ʌ	o ɔ
Low	æ	aj aw	a

Note: only LONG vowels

EME Vowels: The Great Vowel Shift

Year						Example	
1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	ME	PDE
i:	əj	aj, ai	——>		aj, ai	ride	ride
e:	——>	i:	——>		i	feet	feet
ɛ:	——>		e:	i	i	beeme	beam
a:	——>	æ:	ɛ:	e:	e	make	make
u:	əʊ	aw, aʊ	——>		aw, aʊ	mouth	mouth
o:	——>	u:	——>		u	food	food
ɔ:	——>		o:	——>	o	stone	stone

1755

Spelling reform

EME Great Vowel Shift Exceptions

/ɛ:/ —> /i:/

Shortened before GVS

threat
head
death
deaf

Stopped at /e:/

break
steak
great

/o:/ —> /u:/

Became /ʊ/ after GVS

foot
good
hook
wood

Became /ʌ/ after GVS

flood
blood

Note: *roof, root, soot…*

ME	Late EME/PDE	PDE Spelling
1. [dō]		
2. [fūl]		
3. [ʃō]		
4. [nɛk]		
5. [ðēzə]		
6. [stēk]		
7. [tūn]		
8. [fāsə]		
9. [hɔ̄mə]		

Great Vowel Shift Exercise

ME	Late EME/PDE	PDE Spelling
10. [bʊl]		
11. [dā]		
12. [θrōt]		
13. [pūnd]		
14. [fat]		
15. [tʃēzə]		
16. [fātə]		
17. [mōn]		
18. [tīdə]		

Great Vowel Shift Exercise

ME	Late EME/PDE	PDE Spelling
1. [dō]	[du]	'do'
2. [fūl]	[fawl]	'foul'
3. [ʃō]	[ʃu]	'shoe'
4. [nɛk]	[nɛk]	'neck'
5. [ðēzə]	[ðiz]	'these'
6. [stɛ̄k]	[stek]	'steak, stake'
7. [tūn]	[tawn]	'town'
8. [fāsə]	[fes]	'face'
9. [hɔ̄mə]	[hom]	'home'

Great Vowel Shift Exercise

ME	Late EME/PDE	PDE Spelling
10. [bʊl]	[bʊl]	'bull'
11. [dā]	[de]	'day'
12. [θrōt]	[θrot]	'throat'
13. [pūnd]	[pawnd]	'pound'
14. [fat]	[fat]	'fat'
15. [tʃēzə]	[tʃiz]	'cheese'
16. [fātə]	[fet]	'fate'
17. [mōn]	[mun]	'moon'
18. [tīdə]	[tajd]	'tide'

EME Diphthongs

ME	EME	PDE	Examples
aw, aʊ	ɔ	——>	*law, cause, hawk, claw*
ɔw, ɔʊ	o	——>	*snow, know, blow, soul*
æɪ	a: —> æ:	ɛ: —> e	*nail, day, raise, stake*
ɛʊ, ɪʊ	ju —> u	——>	*new, fruit, glue, rude*
ɛʊ, ɪʊ	ju	——>	*few, mute, hew, cute*
ʊɪ	əɪ —> aɪ	ɔɪ	*join, toil, boil, destroy*
ɔɪ	——>	——>	*joy, avoid, royal, choice*
aʊ	ɔ	——>	*cause, hawk, claw, autumn*

Early Modern English Nouns

- Number: Singular and Plural
- Plural marked by s
- Irregular plurals
  - Mutated vowels: feet, geese, teeth, lice, mice, men, women
  - -n plurals: oxen, kine, brethren, children
  - Uninflected plurals: deer, sheep, swine, folk, kind

Early Modern English Nouns

- Case: Genitive and non-genitive
- Genitive singular marked by s

- His-genitive
- Augustus his daughter
- Elizabeth Holland her howse
- And this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake.

Early Modern English Nouns

- His-genitive a mistake?
- Mars's armor = Mars his armor
- Mrs. Sands his maid. (OED 1607)
- Job's patience, Moses his meekness, Abraham's faith. (OED 1568)

Early Modern English Adj & Adv

- Same as ME
- Still no rigid rule (until Lowth, 1762)
  - *violentest*
  - *certainer*
  - *more bold*
  - *the most brave*
  - *the most stillest night*

Early Modern English Pronouns

Case		1st	**2nd**	3rd M	3rd F	3rd N
SING	N	I	**thou**	he, a	she	it, hit
	A	me	**thee**	him	her	it, hit
	G	my/mine	**thy/thine**	his	her, hers	his, it, its
PLUR	N	we	**ye/you**	they		
	A	us	**you/ye**	them, (h)em		
	G	our, ours	**your, yours**	their, theirs		

EME Inflection: Verbs

			Strong	Weak
Infinitive			'to drink'	'to hope'
Present	Indicative	1 Sg	drink	hope
		2 Sg	drinkest, drinkst	hopest
		3 Sg	drinketh, drinks	hopeth, hopes
		Pl	drink	hope
	Participle		drinking	hoping
Past	Indicative	1, 3 Sg	drank	hoped
		2 Sg	drank, drank(e)st	hoped
		Pl	drank	hoped
	Participle		drunken	hoped

EME Word Order: Verb Phrases Auxiliary verbs

- Development of compound verb phrases
  - Perfect + progressive
    - We have been watching you
  - Passive + progressive
    - You are being watched
- Development of complex modals
  - be going to
  - have to
  - be about to

EME Word Order: Verb Phrases Negation

- Verb + not
  - I doubt it not
  - It belongs not to you
- Aux + not
  - I do not doubt it
  - A team of horse shall not pluck that from me
- Multiple Negation (until Lowth, 1762)
  - *they are not bound to stand to no determination*
  - *nor that she never was married*

EME Word Order: Interrogatives Yes-No

- Inversion of Auxiliary verb
  - Do you love me?
  - Dost thou know who speaks?
  - Canst thou catch any fishes then?
  - Can you talk skilfully of Mrs. Siddons?
- Inversion of verb
  - Came he home?
  - Is not this my home?

EME Word Order: Interrogatives WH- Questions

- Inversion of Auxiliary verb
  - Why do you look on me?
  - What do you see?
  - How hast thou offended?
  - How should I your true love know?
- Inversion of verb
  - Why look you upon me?
  - What sayde he?

EME Borrowings: French

French	orig Spanish	orig Italian
admire	*grenade*	*bankrupt*
barbarian	*palisade*	*brigade*
bizarre	*escalade*	*brusque*
density	*cavalier*	*carat*
effigy	*caramel*	*cavalcade*
formidable		*frigate*
gratitude		*gala*
hospitable		*gazetter*
mustache		*groteque*
notoriety		*infantry*
parade		*parakeet*

EME Borrowings: Romance languages

Italian	Spanish	Portuguese
archipelago	*alligator*	*albino*
cameo	*armada*	*dodo*
cupola	*sombrero*	*molasses*
ghetto	*tortilla*	*zebra*
grotto		
macaroni	Non-PIE	Non-PIE
malaria	*avocado* *iguana*	*banana* *tapioca*
piazza	*canoe* *papaya*	*cashew* *teak*
regatta	*cannibal* *potato*	*pagoda* *toucan*
stucco	*chili* *puma*	*piranha* *vindaloo*
volcano	*coyote* *tomato*	*mango* *yam*

EME Borrowings: Germanic, Celtic

Dutch	German	Celtic
commodore	*cobalt*	*brogue*
cruise	*feldspar*	*cairn*
deck	*gneiss*	*galore*
sloop	*quartz*	*hubbub*
yacht	*zinc*	*leprechaun*
easel	*halt*	*plaid*
etch	*knapsack*	*shamrock*
sketch	*noodle*	*shillelagh*
brandy	*plunder*	*slogan*
foist	*swindle*	*trousers*
sleigh	*waltz*	*whiskey*

EME Borrowings: Non-European

Native American	Asian	Turkish
muskrat	<u>Hindi</u>	*jackal*
opossum	*bandanna*	*pasha*
raccoon	*bangle*	*pilaf*
skunk	*cummerbund*	*sherbet*
pecan	*guru*	*turban*
squash	*pundit*	*yogurt*
moccasin		
tomahawk	<u>Chinese</u>	
caucus	*ginseng*	
place names…	*ketchup*	
	tea	

EME Interjections

Politeness, Surprise	Swearing
excuse me	*criminy*
please	*egad*
hollo	*gadzooks*
What!	*golly*
Oh!	*gosh*
Lo!	*by jingo*
Hay!	*sblood*
Wow!	*zounds*
	odsbones, odslife, odstruth,
	ods pithkins
	ods haricots, ods kilderkins